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- Today's Insider (PDF)



YOU DON'T SAY...

"I figured it was from legislators' little fun fund."

Warren Hepler, a Wallace council member, on an \$830,000 earmark in the state budget to improve sewage capacity near a golfing community.

THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 1/21/18

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News Summary

Redistricting Maps

The Senate's judicial redistricting proposal would create more districts that would likely elect Republican judges than under the redistricting maps proposed by the House, according to an Insider analysis of past election results. A joint House and Senate committee is considering both proposals and is scheduled to hold its next meeting this afternoon; the agenda includes "presentation of different map option" and "continued discussion of merit selection models."

Both the current House and Senate proposals would split large urban counties into multiple judicial districts, because Republicans argue the current countywide districts there have become too large. But the two plans differ on how to divide the counties and how many districts to create. Rep. Justin Burr, R-Stanly and the sponsor of the House proposal, and the three Senate judicial redistricting co-chairs did not respond to inquiries about the criteria used to divide counties and why the two proposals are different.

The Insider reviewed election results in the proposed districts for last year's gubernatorial contest to see which party would perform better under each proposal. While both the House and Senate plans would create districts where Republican judges would have a strong shot at winning, the Senate includes more districts that lean heavily Republican.

For example, the Senate plan would divide Buncombe County into three districts, with two of them leaning Democratic. The third district voted 52 percent in favor of Republican Pat McCrory last year. It has about 1,400 fewer voters than the Democratic-leaning districts but would have three judges. The two Democratic-leaning districts would have two judges each. The House plan would create two Buncombe districts, with one leaning heavily Democratic while the other has a mostly even split between the two parties. McCrory received 49 percent of the vote in that district while Cooper received 48 percent. That district would have four judges while the Democratic-leaning district would have three.

In Mecklenburg County, the Senate plan calls for dividing the state's most populous county into eight districts – six leaning Democratic, two leaning Republican. That would give Republicans a strong shot at six of the county's 24 judicial seats – a fourth of the judicial seats in a county where about a third of voters backed McCrory. The House plan has two Mecklenburg districts, with one leaning heavily Democratic and one closely split between Democrats and Republicans. In that district, Cooper received 49.8 percent of the vote while McCrory received 47.6 percent. The Democratic-leaning district would have 12 judges, while the more competitive district would have nine. Similar dynamics appear in the House and Senate proposals for Forsyth and Guilford counties.

In Wake County, the Senate plan would create seven districts, with five leaning heavily Democratic and two leaning slightly Republican. The House plan calls for four districts, all of which favored Cooper over McCrory but one of which had Cooper winning by 1 percentage point. Durham County is divided in both proposals but all its districts would lean Democratic. In Cumberland County, both the House and Senate proposals would likely result in six Republican judges and five Democratic judges

in a county where Cooper received 56 percent of the vote. Mecklenburg and Pender counties – currently a single judicial district – would be split into three districts in both proposed plans, with a Democratic majority in one district and a Republican majority in the two others.

In addition to the urban counties, the two plans have small differences in how they group together smaller counties for judicial districts. For example, the House plan groups Nash County with neighboring Edgecombe and Wilson, while the Senate plan would group Nash with Franklin, Granville and Person counties – something that has prompted opposition from Nash leaders, who point to current shared resources with Edgecombe County resulting from Rocky Mount's location in both counties.

An analysis of the proposed districts conducted by the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, which has criticized the redistricting proposals, found that both the House and Senate plans would result in Republicans occupying about 70 percent of judicial seats statewide. By contrast, Republicans are favored to win in 58.76 percent of the current Superior Court districts and 56.62 percent of the current District Court districts, according to the group's report. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 1/22/18)

Redistricting Stay

Resources: [Stay Request](#)

Attorneys for Republican legislative leaders are moving quickly to appeal a federal court ruling on legislative districts to the U.S. Supreme Court, and on Sunday they filed a stay request in U.S. District Court calling for a delay while the high court reviews the case. Sunday's court filing asks U.S. District Court judges to rule on the request today (Jan. 22) "so that legislative defendants can immediately seek a stay from the United States Supreme Court if necessary."

The move follows Friday's court order striking down legislative district maps approved in August and instead calling for this year's election to use districts drawn by a Stanford University law professor hired by the court. Attorneys for legislative leaders argued in their Sunday filing that the Friday ruling is "already resulting in irreparable injury."

"Just weeks before filing, the Court's decision will require voters and candidates to become familiar with several dozen brand new districts in multiple counties," attorney Phil Strach wrote in the filing. "For candidates, this likely means reassessing or rearranging plans they had to mount campaigns in the Subject Districts. This is the precise situation the Supreme Court has directed lower courts to be mindful of avoiding given the very real risks that court orders changing election rules close to an election may 'result in voter confusion and consequent incentive to remain away from the polls.'" Strach also argues that the Supreme Court "will likely reverse this court's attempt to create a new state constitutional standard for mid-decade redistricting under the North Carolina Constitution." (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 1/22/18)

Legislative Redistricting

Resources: [Court Order](#)

A panel of federal judges has ordered North Carolina lawmakers to use maps created by a Stanford University law professor in the coming elections -- in the second ruling from last week on a state redistricting case. The ruling, released on Friday, comes less than a month before the filing period opens on Feb. 12 for candidates seeking office in the state Senate and House of Representatives. The ruling has an impact on districts in eight counties -- Senate districts in Cumberland, Guilford and Hoke, and House districts in Bladen, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Sampson, Wake and Wayne counties. All other districts remain as adopted by lawmakers in late August. It caps a week of much redistricting news for North Carolina. Less than 24 hours earlier, early Thursday evening, the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the effects of a ruling in a different gerrymander case in which a different three-judge panel found North Carolina's 13 congressional districts to be unconstitutional partisan gerrymanders. Republican lawmakers plan to appeal Friday's ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court as well.

The plan by Nathaniel Persily of Stanford University alters nine legislative districts adopted by lawmakers in 2017 to comply with a 2016 court ruling. In 2016, federal judges ruled that 28 of the state's districts used for electing General Assembly members were unconstitutional racial gerrymanders. The challengers argued that some of the 2017 districts still were shaped to weaken the overall influence of black voters. They also argued that some of the districts in urban areas such as Wake and Guilford counties were altered mid-decade in violation of the state Constitution. "We appreciate the input and guidance of the Special Master and the Court to fully eliminate the unconstitutional use of race to segregate voters in North Carolina state legislative districts. North Carolinians across this state fought for fair districts. We hope that legislators respect the reasoned opinion of this court that this kind of race discrimination has no place in our democracy," said Allison Riggs, senior voting rights attorney at the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, which represented challengers.

"It is a shocking move for one of the same judges just reined in by a bipartisan U.S. Supreme Court less than 24 hours ago to again attempt to create chaos and confusion in an election process set to begin in just three weeks," Rep. David Lewis, R-Harnett, and Sen. Ralph Hise, R-Mitchell, the lawmakers who led the redistricting process, said in a joint statement. "The legislature has repeatedly asked this court to provide guidance, citing the urgency of the upcoming candidate filing period. Contrary to our pleas and fresh off yesterday's stinging rebuke from the high court, this panel has unleashed another bout of uncertainty that could harm North Carolina voters who are entitled to free and fair elections." The Supreme Court order mentioned by Lewis and Hise temporarily blocked federal judges' ruling in a case that was the first of its kind to declare congressional maps to be partisan gerrymanders. The order did not mention the merits of the judges' ruling nor did it say whether the justices planned to take up the case. It stated that lawmakers did not have to draw new maps by next week, as the judges ordered, while a full appeal is prepared.

Keeping up with all the redistricting cases in North Carolina this decade can be dizzying. At least five have been filed since the 2011 plans were adopted. The legislative districts have been challenged in several of the cases and attorneys have used a variety of legal arguments to challenge the districts and defend them.

James Wynn of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, appointed by President Barack Obama, U.S. District Judge Catherine Eagles, also an Obama appointee, and U.S. District Judge Thomas Schroeder, a George W. Bush appointee, presided over the case that led to the ruling on Friday. Wynn, who has been a focus of criticism by North Carolina Republicans, also was on the panel of judges -- appointed by Democratic and Republican presidents -- that found the congressional districts to be unconstitutional. "If a power-hungry federal court can order that a California-based professor gets to usurp the North Carolina legislature's constitutional authority to draw election maps, then there is no limit to federal judicial power," Lt. Gov. Dan Forest, a Republican, posted to Twitter. "This is nothing short of judicial tyranny."

North Carolina Democratic Party Chairman Wayne Goodwin offered a different take on the ruling. "Today's order is a key victory for North Carolina voters and a major step towards fair representation," Goodwin said in a statement. "Republicans unconstitutionally rigged our elections for years, silencing North Carolina voters, in particular, communities of color. We applaud the court's decision and look forward to competing in fairer districts across the state."

Phil Strach, the Raleigh-based attorney representing Republican lawmakers who led the redrawing of legislative lines, has argued that judges hired Persily prematurely, before ruling on the constitutionality of the new districts. Strach also contended that no evidence was presented to judges that lawmakers had used race as a predominant factor in the drawing of the lines. He argued, as lawmakers asserted before adopting the maps in August 2017, that race was not considered in the redrawing of districts. Republican lawmakers said their goal was to protect incumbent lawmakers and try to keep counties and voting precincts whole when possible. (Anne Blythe, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 1/19/18)

Judicial Redistricting

Republicans in the North Carolina General Assembly are picking up the pace on creating new judicial election districts, with some leaders hopeful Friday that an agreement could come this week. House Speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, and the chamber's top judicial mapmaker expressed optimism in interviews that a deal would be reached very soon on redrawn election lines for Superior Court and District Court seats and for local prosecutors. During a quick, compulsory House floor meeting Friday morning, Moore also told chamber colleagues to be prepared for full work sessions and recorded votes starting Tuesday. Moore told The Associated Press he thinks a deal on judicial redistricting between the two chambers can be expected soon.

The impetus for judicial changes came from House Republicans last summer. Their Senate counterparts only began weighing changes in November and suggested Friday that more time may be needed to get on board. Sen. Warren Daniel, R-Burke, a co-chairman of a joint House and Senate judicial reform committee, said it was too early to know whether enough Senate Republicans would support a final plan. The goal for Senate Republicans, Daniel said, would be "to have something that could be presented to both bodies by the end of next week." The joint committee is scheduled to meet on Monday, with the release of a new map option on the agenda. The Senate hasn't finalized plans for next week beyond Monday.

Nearly unified support from Republicans in their veto-proof House and Senate is important if Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper vetoes the final plan, meaning an override would be needed for it to be enacted. Cooper and Democratic lawmakers are likely to oppose boundaries unless they are delayed for additional outside input, particularly from judicial groups and Democrats. Democrats and their allies have called recent proposals partisan gerrymanders that would favor Republicans and mark the latest GOP legislation to tilt courts in their favor. Map opponents also say too many pairs of black incumbents would be drawn into the same districts, meaning one of the judges could not win re-election.

Republicans say they've given Democrats plenty of chances to present alternate maps. Rep. Justin Burr, R-Stanly, the sponsor of the House judicial redistricting bill, has met personally with many judges and said Friday that racial gerrymandering claims haven't been backed by facts. Daniel said, however, it would be good to review where judges live to evaluate the impact. Republicans have said it's time to overhaul judicial districts statewide for the first time in several decades to reflect growth and make judicial election boundaries within urban counties more equal in population. They have cited redistricting experts who have suggested the current lines could be susceptible to constitutional challenges.

Legislators also have been debating whether to propose to state voters a new way of selecting judges that would eliminate head-to-head elections. But Moore and Sen. Ralph Hise, R-Mitchell, said Friday there is no consensus now on a replacement, which would require a constitutional amendment and referendum. The legislature canceled this year's judicial primaries. Republicans said they did so to keep working on districts further into 2018 without causing confusion since candidate filing would have started in February. Now the judicial filing period is in June. Democrats are challenging the cancellation in federal court, with a hearing set for Wednesday. (Gary D. Robertson, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1/19/18)

Cancelled

A Tuesday meeting of the House Elections and Ethics Law Committee was scheduled Saturday but had been cancelled by Sunday evening, according to a tweet from Rep. David Lewis, R-Harnett and the chairman of the committee. The meeting notice sent Saturday said the committee would be discussing a proposed committee substitute to Senate Bill 486, which in its current form involves procedures for the extension of voting hours during an election. Lewis did not say what the new version of the bill would include, nor did his Sunday night tweet offer an explanation for the cancellation. (THE INSIDER, 1/22/18)

Shutdown Pay

Since the federal government is shut down, federal employees like members of the military or postal carriers are being asked to work without pay. But one group of people won't lose their taxpayer-funded paychecks during the shutdown: The nation's 538 U.S. senators and representatives. Some members of Congress have, however, begun announcing they won't accept pay while the shutdown continues -- including at least three of North Carolina's 15 members of Congress. All three are Republicans. Since they make a \$175,000 annual salary, that could add up to a loss of thousands of dollars each, depending on how long it takes Congress to agree on getting the government funded again. Republican Rep. Mark Walker, who represents areas from Greensboro to Lee County, wrote on Twitter that turning down his pay is "the very least I can do" until the military gets paid again.

Republican Rep. Mark Meadows of Asheville, who leads the hardline Freedom Caucus, said no one in Congress should get paid while the government is shut down -- and he would lead by example. "I will not be accepting one dime of my salary," he wrote on Twitter. "As long as our military members and families aren't being paid, I won't be paid either."

Democrats did come up with a temporary plan to pay military salaries while the larger shutdown debate continued, but it went nowhere. In the Senate, Missouri Democrat Claire McCaskill proposed a bill that would've kept the troops paid and stopped civilian defense workers from being furloughed. However, Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell wouldn't let her bill come up for a vote.

Rep. Robert Pittenger, a Republican whose district stretches from Charlotte to just outside of Fort Bragg, indicated he would stop accepting his taxpayer-funded salary until the troops are also getting paid again. "For Members of Congress to still receive pay during a government shutdown is unconscionable," Pittenger wrote on Twitter.

Democrats like G.K. Butterfield, who represents northeastern North Carolina, said Republicans "refused" to give Democrats any input on the spending bill and shouldn't act surprised that most Democrats didn't want to vote for it. "Republicans continue to push a far-right agenda that favors the few at the expense of the many," Butterfield wrote on Twitter. "But no one wins when our politics devolve to the point of a government shut down."

But while many in Congress expressed frustration with the shutdown, many in the White House did not seem too concerned. President Donald Trump's budget director Mick Mulvaney called it "kind of cool" that he will be the one to personally oversee the shutdown, and Trump's son Eric Trump said that as long as the public blames Democrats, the shutdown will be "a good thing for us." (Will Doran, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 1/21/18)

Class Size Mandate

Sen. Bill Rabon, chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, pumped the brakes late Thursday on talk of a March special session to consider North Carolina class size rules. Sen. John Alexander, R-Wake, has told constituents to expect such a session. Rabon, R-Brunswick, reached via press spokespeople for Senate leadership, threw some cold water on that Thursday night, via an emailed statement. "We appreciate and share Sen. Alexander's strong commitment to find a resolution that will ensure the smaller class sizes we've already paid for while funding enhancement teachers beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, but we have not yet determined a specific timeline," Rabon said.

Rabon also pointed to data, due back to the legislature at the end of February, Senate leaders have repeatedly said they want to have in hand before making decisions. "Last year, school districts began raising concerns that they would no longer be able to fund enhancement teachers in subject areas like art, music, drama and P.E," Rabon said in his statement. "We asked them to share their calculations with lawmakers so we could understand how much, if any, additional funding was needed and are in the process of analyzing the data."

This has been one of the hotter issues before the legislature: Whether to implement smaller K-3 class

sizes during the 2018-19 school year as planned or to delay them for the second time in two years. Fast growing systems, such as Wake County, have said they can't meet the legislature's mandates without more time, funding or some combination of major shifts, including significant increases in class sizes above third grade, physically adding classroom space and shifting students from one school district to another. In October House Republicans backed a plan to grant schools flexibility on the new restrictions, but the Senate declined.

While lawmakers are waiting, local districts are trying to get a break from mandated class-size cuts, a rule that could see schools across the state cut arts and PE classes, convert libraries into classrooms or share teachers between rooms. That year-long delay also came with a promise from legislators to study how schools pay for arts and PE classes, which superintendents across the state said would become casualties if those teachers had to be moved to K-3 classrooms.

But with schools in the southeastern part of the state just weeks from finalizing their hiring decisions for 2018-19, the General Assembly has not relaxed the rule. The resulting rush to satisfy it has drawn the attention of Gov. Roy Cooper and prompted a social media rallying cry: #ClassSizeChaos. One bill, Senate Bill 703, floated by a group of Democratic senators, was filed this month during the mini-session. That bill would have let K-3 classes exceed the new maximums by up to six students, as long as the district-wide average was within three students of the maximums. But on Jan. 12, the legislation was sent to the Senate rules committee, widely considered the place bills go to die. And Rep. Deb Butler, D-New Hanover, said House leadership has been dodgy in answering her questions about class size.

After talking with New Hanover County Schools Superintendent Tim Markley, Butler said she wrote to Rep. Craig Horn, R-Union, chairman of the House committee on appropriations for education. Butler said Horn told her the committee was aware of the problem and believed it would be fixed. But she's heard few specifics on what might be filed when legislators reconvene this spring. And as Markley told the New Hanover school board's class-size compliance committee in September, that will be too late for schools, which have to make teacher allotment and hiring decisions before May. "There just has been very little guidance forthcoming," Butler said. "The question is, are we going to lose our 'specials,' meaning our music, PE and art teachers; are we going to have to buy more trailers to create more classrooms; and how many of these specials is the General Assembly prepared to fund? And I couldn't get answers to any of those."

New Hanover County Schools leaders have estimated they'll need 48 more K-3 teachers to satisfy the rule -- not to mention classrooms for them. This month the Pender County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution asking the legislature for funding to meet the rule and to slow its implementation. According to the resolution, Pender schools will need 20 more teachers, and art and music would have to be put on carts pushed from classroom to classroom. Brunswick County Schools has already taken steps to comply, creating 32 new K-3 teachers by cutting literacy coach and teacher assistant positions. Computer labs and at least one trailer have also been turned into classrooms. (Travis Fain, WRAL NEWS and Cammie Bellamy, WILMINGTON STAR-NEWS, 1/19/18)

Budget Earmark

Over the past few years, a pumping station at River Landing in Duplin County has struggled to keep up with the sewage flow at the upscale golf community started by hog farming magnate Wendell Murphy and his family. Sewage has spilled at least three times from the station, and in one case made it to a pond close by. The nearby town of Wallace has workers divert the sewage flow during significant rains to prevent further spills. More importantly, the lack of sewage capacity has impeded River Landing's plans to expand its hotel at the front of the 1,600-acre community.

The town and the Murphy family's representatives had been trying to hash out the problem when Mayor Charley Farrior's phone rang in late May. On the other end was state Rep. Jimmy Dixon, R-Duplin, who was willing to request state money to help fix it. The town hadn't asked for his assistance. Three weeks later, Dixon secured \$830,000 for the sewer upgrades in the final version of the \$23 billion state budget, one of dozens of earmarks -- specially designated spending items -- that

lawmakers inserted totaling more than \$70 million. But this earmark primarily benefits a business co-founded by a powerful former state lawmaker who has long supported politicians of both parties with campaign donations. That includes Dixon, who was elected to the legislature in 2010. Since 2011, Murphy, his family and employees have given Dixon \$42,750 in political contributions and in-kind support, such as food for a fundraiser, state campaign finance records show. Dixon and Jeffery Turner, executive vice president of Murphy Family Ventures, which developed River Landing, say political contributions had nothing to do with the appropriation.

Murphy, who has retired from the family business, could not be reached. He helped revolutionize hog farming in North Carolina, building a company that was the nation's largest hog producer at one point and used his clout as a Democratic state lawmaker in the 1980s and 1990s to pass legislation favorable to high-density hog farms. Dixon is a retired poultry farmer, and last year he succeeded in passing legislation limiting the damages residents could receive in court over claims that odors from nearby hog farms harmed their quality of life. He said the \$830,000 appropriation wasn't about helping the Murphys. He saw it as helping pay for infrastructure that brings an economic boost. It will add a second sewer main out of River Landing to Wallace's sewer system, and other businesses will be able to tap into it.

It is unusual for state lawmakers to earmark money for such projects. In 2013, state lawmakers created the State Water Infrastructure Authority to provide grants and loans for water and sewer projects through a competitive process. But in recent years, state lawmakers have stepped up using earmarks for their districts to pay for projects that would typically go through the authority and other grant-awarding agencies. Republicans have controlled the state legislature since 2011. A decade earlier, many of them spoke against such "pork barrel" spending when Democrats largely ruled the roost. In 2005, after The News & Observer identified a \$10 million slush fund for such earmarks, some Republican lawmakers dubbed it "N.C. Pork Gate," and displayed posters of suckling piglets.

Rep. Nelson Dollar, R-Wake, and a chief budget writer said the Wallace appropriation came from existing funds within the water and sewer infrastructure grant program, while the other town appropriations represented new spending. The money report doesn't include a "carve out" of an existing fund, said Dollar, who supported the Wallace appropriation. (Dan Kane, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 1/21/18)

Merger

A proposal to combine UNC Health Care and Carolinas HealthCare System into one of the nation's largest healthcare systems is prompting questions about its legality from a skeptical board member on the UNC Board of Governors. The questions raised by board member Tom Fetzer, a prominent lobbyist with several healthcare clients, mark the first hint of conflict on UNC's Board of Governors over the planned health care deal. The Board of Governors oversees the statewide university system, including UNC-Chapel Hill's medical school, which would become part of the UNC-Carolinas sprawling business partnership. The UNC-Carolinas partnership would employ 90,000 people and include more than 50 hospitals, to be overseen by an independent board of directors. A number of experts have pointed out that large-scale hospital consolidations lead to higher health care costs because the larger systems can wrest higher fees from health insurer and patients.

Fetzer, a former Raleigh mayor and former chairman of the North Carolina Republican Party, sent an email late Thursday to Board of Governors chairman Louis Bissette and to UNC system president Margaret Spellings, asking whether the proposed partnership between UNC and Charlotte-based Carolinas is being conducted legally. Fetzer noted that state law requires UNC Health Care System to keep the UNC Board of Governors apprised about any important policy changes. But, Fetzer said, UNC Health Care conducted clandestine discussions about the partnership with Charlotte-based Carolinas for about a year without notifying the Board of Governors. UNC Health Care didn't inform UNC's Board of Governors until last August, several days before announcing the partnership plans to the public. "This is, in my opinion, perhaps the most important health care development in the history of the state of North Carolina," Fetzer said in a phone interview. "If you kept this deal secret for a year, does that fall within the definition of 'fully informed?' The Manhattan Project wasn't as

well-kept a secret as this was."

UNC, which includes 13 hospitals, and Carolinas HealthCare have been negotiating the terms of their partnership for the past four months, and expect to finalize a deal early this year. Both sides say their partnership would not be a legal merger, but the joint operating company would be overseen by an independent board of directors. Beyond the general outline presented last August -- which induces promises of increased health care for the state's rural areas -- the details are sketchy. Fetzer is questioning the validity of the partnership from a sensitive position. He's a lobbyist for Blue Cross and Blue Shield, the state's largest health insurer, which could potentially have to pay higher fees for medical services to the giant hospital network. Fetzer also lobbies for WakeMed Health & Hospitals, which competes with UNC and Duke University Health System for patients and for doctors.

Because of those potential conflicts of interest, Fetzer has recused himself from the Board of Governor's activities concerning the UNC-Carolinas partnership. Underlying Fetzer's frustration is the uncomfortable reality that there is no consensus on whether UNC's Board of Governors has the legal authority to block UNC Health Care's partnership with Carolinas, in the event that members of the Board of Governors were to conclude that the mega-deal would risk the future of UNC's medical school or would not benefit the citizens of North Carolina. Neither Spellings or Bissette was immediately available for comment about Fetzer's query on Friday. (John Murawski, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 1/19/18)

GenX Cost

Many agree companies such as Chemours should pay to deal with problems caused by their pollution. But, actually getting money from polluters and providing it to state regulators, particularly for day-to-day costs such as staff and equipment, might be more difficult than it first appears. Earlier this month, the N.C. House unanimously passed a bill that would have provided \$2.3 million in state funds, largely for equipment and personnel, to address emerging contaminants such as GenX. The state Senate promptly declined to take it up.

Explaining his colleagues' move, Senate President Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, said in part that the bill "leaves North Carolina taxpayers holding the bag for expenditures that should be paid for by the company responsible for the pollution." Robin Smith, a Raleigh attorney and former assistant secretary of the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), said parsing the Senate's rejection may come down to determining how lawmakers view GenX-related contamination: Is it a single problem involving one company on a 100-mile stretch of the Cape Fear River or a symptom of a larger, statewide issue encompassing a number of emerging contaminants such as GenX? "I don't fully understand what the Senate is thinking in terms of having Chemours absorb the cost," Smith said. "There are some things violators routinely are required to compensate for if they have violated a water quality standard or caused contamination, and that's pretty well established."

If state appropriations are not a funding option, as Berger seemed to imply, where else could lawmakers look? Fines or penalties might seem like a logical first choice: Companies that break rules should pay to address problems that result. Chemours already faces potential fines for two notices DEQ issued last year related to alleged violations at the company's Fayetteville Works plant. Even if fines are collected, though, that does not mean the proceeds can fund DEQ operations. The N.C. constitution mandates receipts from fines go to schools in the counties where the penalties are assessed, Smith said. Historically, school districts have enforced that provision diligently.

Two public entities -- the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority (CFPUA) and Brunswick County -- already have filed suits against Chemours. Can the state do that, too? "I think the state's options for recovering funds it spends on staff and equipment to investigate and respond to GenX contamination are quite limited," said Joel A. Mintz, a professor at the Shepard Broad College of Law at Nova Southeastern University and former EPA attorney. "The (federal) Superfund statute allows for EPA and the U.S. Department of Justice to recover those kinds of expenditures from parties responsible for contamination of land and groundwater by hazardous substances. However, the Clean Water Act has no parallel provision, with the exception of federal response actions respecting oil spills."

Chemours and other large manufacturers pay \$3,440 a year for the privilege of discharging more than 1 million gallons per day of pollutant-laden wastewater into North Carolina's rivers and other waters. Legislators could look at increasing those fees, though in recent years their focus has been instead on weakening or eliminating regulations deemed as burdensome to industry. (Vaughn Hagerty, WILMINGTON STAR-NEWS, 1/20/18)

Military Shutdown

As many as 800 civilians are expected to be furloughed on Fort Bragg this week because of the government shutdown. The nearly 54,000 service members on post will still report to duty, while schedules for the 20,000 civilian workers will change. Soldiers will not get paid under the shutdown unless Congress passes a separate spending measure. Tom McCollum, a spokesman for Fort Bragg, said all civilian employees should report for duty as scheduled Monday morning.

Col. Kyle Reed, Fort Bragg garrison commander, worked with garrison directors to determine which activities are mission-essential and will continue, and which are not required, McCollum said. Civilian employees fall under more than six major commands, including Installation Management Command; U.S. Army Special Operations Command; Training and Doctrine Command; and Transportation Command. Those civilians who do not work in mission-essential positions will be notified that they are being furloughed on Monday, McCollum said. For the garrison civilian workforce, that means about 800 of 1,235 civilian employees could be furloughed, he said.

Active-duty military personnel continue normal duty status but are not paid until Congress approves funds. Womack Army Medical Center operates under normal conditions. Primary care is uninterrupted. Elective surgeries that are medically needed continue but may be reviewed more stringently. Contractors performing under a fully funded contract awarded prior to the shutdown continue to work, but new contracts -- including renewals or extensions -- cannot be executed.

Nat Fahy, director of Communication Strategy and Operations for Camp Lejeune and New River, said the government shutdown will affect the operating status of a number of installation services and quality of life and family readiness programs offered to service members and their families. He said libraries, the Education Center, all recreation centers, the Outdoor Recreation office, the Relocation Assistance office, professional development services and more will be closed, and some services will be operating with reduced staff and operating hours that may cause service delays, such as at the ID Card Center. The commissaries will not receive any deliveries after Sunday and will remain open through at least Wednesday to reduce the number of perishables on-hand and to properly safeguard equipment and facilities. (Amanda Dolasinski, THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER, Jannette Pippin, THE (Jacksonville) DAILY NEWS, 1/20/18)

Double Bunked

It is now official. High Country lawmakers have been double-bunked in the North Carolina state Senate. The U.S. District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina approved and adopted new state legislative maps remedied by a "special master" on Friday. The new maps will be used starting with the 2018 election. The maps keep the changes the North Carolina General Assembly made in August 2017 in which two current Senate Republicans are now in a redrawn District 45 -- Sen. Deanna Ballard, R-Watauga, and Sen. Shirley B. Randleman, R-Wilkes, who was moved from the old District 30. The new District 45 shifts east, dropping Avery and Caldwell counties and adding Wilkes and the western half of Surry County. Watauga, Ashe, Wilkes and Alleghany counties remain in the district. Both Ballard and Randleman have indicated they plan to file for re-election in 2018. (Thomas Sherrill, THE WATAUGA DEMOCRAT, 1/19/18)

Offshore Drilling

A majority of the New Hanover County Commissioners are opposed to the Trump administration's offshore drilling proposal, and the body is expected to adopt a resolution on the matter during its Monday meeting. "Our interests are really tied to the health of our beaches and our coastal

economies, and at this point it doesn't seem to make much sense to take the risk of developing any type of offshore drilling," said Commissioner Rob Zapple, a Democrat, who pushed for a similar resolution shortly after starting his term in 2015. The county's resolution would see it join more than 30 other local N.C. governments, Gov. Roy Cooper and much of the Eastern Seaboard in opposition. If approved as proposed, the plan would allow drilling off the coast of 49 states and possibly Florida, although Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke may or may not have pulled that state off the map with a tweet.

New Hanover County's board meeting starts at 9 a.m. Monday, just hours before Cooper, a Democrat, is expected to speak in Wrightsville Beach about his opposition to Trump's plan. Woody White, the New Hanover board's chairman, tweeted on Jan. 4 that he is opposed to drilling for oil and natural gas off the "Carolina Coast." In his tweet directed at President Donald Trump and Sec. Zinke, White said he agrees with most of the administration's positions, but respectfully disagrees with offshore drilling. "I don't see that our energy policy should outweigh our concerns about tourism or the local environment," White said Friday.

Brunswick County voted on Tuesday to walk back its pro-drilling stance, leaving Carteret County as the sole coastal N.C. government to support offshore exploration. New Hanover Commissioner Patricia Kusek, a Republican, said she would support a resolution opposing offshore oil exploration. While offshore drilling may be a national issue, "this becomes a local issue for us quickly," she said. "I would not be surprised if in the near future we pass a resolution opposing offshore drilling as other coastal counties have done." Skip Watkins, the third New Hanover GOP commissioner, said he is also opposed to exploration off the N.C. coast, in part because domestic production means there isn't a need. Jonathan Barfield, the second Democrat on the board, said such a resolution would be welcome because of the potential impact to the county's ocean-dependent tourism economy.

"I have always been in opposition," he said. While a resolution would not mean the New Hanover County area is pulled from the plan, Zapple -- who plans on forwarding it -- said it would register opposition on a federal level. "It's an overall sign as to what people are thinking in those areas that will be, in this case, most impacted if there's a problem," he said. "I think a resolution says we are not interested in offshore drilling." (Adam Wagner and Tim Buckland, WILMINGTON STAR-NEWS, 1/19/18)

Narcan Use

EMS providers across Onslow County administered overdose-reversing drug Narcan 374 times in 2017 at a cost of nearly \$19,000, according to area officials. Onslow County EMS provided Narcan to patients 355 times while The City of Jacksonville dispensed a similar reversal drug 18 times in the same time period, according to information from the county and city. A survey conducted by The Daily News that included Onslow County law enforcement and first responders found little utilization of Narcan in the Swansboro, Holly Ridge, North Topsail Beach and Richlands areas, but many incidents in the unincorporated areas of the county.

According to Onslow County Emergency Medical Services Division Head David Grovdahl, all EMS personnel are "trained on the use of Narcan as part of their orientation to the system as well as in continuing education." Grovdahl says the chemical formulation of Narcan is the same from the hospital to EMS to first responders to people. "The difference is in the packaging," Grovdahl says. "Lay people and some first responders such as law enforcement have auto-injectors that give a fixed dose. EMS and hospitals have a vial that allows the healthcare provider to determine the dose based on weight. Narcan can be given intra-nasal as a mist, intramuscular or intravenous."

Narcan has been in existence for more than 20 years but has taken on more prominence in the past few years as the opioid crisis has escalated. With the spiraling number of drug users and abusers, Grovdahl and his team of paramedics and EMTs have found themselves responding to more calls where the need for Narcan is required. (Mike McHugh, THE (Jacksonville, NC) DAILY NEWS, 1/20/18)

Pipeline Construction

The company that wants to build a natural gas pipeline from West Virginia to North Carolina says it has gotten permission from the federal government to start cutting down trees to make room for the project. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved a Limited Notice to Proceed for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline on Friday, according to Aaron Ruby, a spokesman for Dominion Energy. Dominion Energy, Duke Energy and Southern Company Gas formed Atlantic Coast Pipeline LLC to build the \$5 billion, 600-mile pipeline from West Virginia through Virginia into North Carolina. The plan calls for about 186 miles of the 36-inch transmission pipeline to go through North Carolina, running through the northeast corner of Sampson County and eastern Cumberland County, before ending in Robeson County near Pembroke.

Opponents say they are worried about potential dangers from the pipeline and say the state should rely more on renewable energy such as solar and wind power. Supporters say they believe the pipeline is safe and will provide a clean source of power that will lower the cost of energy and help economic development in the area. The Southern Environmental Law Center said it filed a legal challenge Friday to the Virginia State Water Control Board's approval of a water quality certification for the pipeline. The center also said it is challenging decisions by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service to issue permits for the pipeline. Ruby said the notice issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission lets the pipeline company begin limited tree felling and vegetation clearing in areas planned for construction in 2018.

"Tree felling will begin in the coming days in West Virginia and Virginia, while activity in North Carolina will begin once we receive remaining state agency approvals," he said. North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality has said that the company needs a more detailed permit to build a contractor's yard in Cumberland County. The department also asked Atlantic Coast Pipeline LLC to provide more information about several other permits and disapproved of an erosion and sediment control plan for the northern part of the pipeline. Ruby said the company expects to keep downing trees until March. "We are now days away from beginning pre-construction work that will pave the way for full construction in the spring and completion of the project in late 2019," he said. (Steve DeVane, THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER, 1/18/19)

Sandburg Home

Because of the government shutdown, the Carl Sandburg Home in Flat Rock, the goat farm and park offices were closed. Access to the trails remains open. There were at least five signs posted throughout the park Saturday. One was at the entrance, another a few yards further down the trail, another near the walkway next to the lake, one at the information center and one at the goat barn.

Danny Bernstein of Asheville drove down to see what impact, if any, the shutdown had on the Sandburg Home, which is a place she visits often. "This is a local park," she said. "Yes, it's a national park, but the way people treat it, it's a local park."

As for impacts on national forests such as Pisgah, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will not be updating its websites with news alerts and information during the shutdown. A notice on the National Forests in North Carolina website says: "This USDA website will not be updated during a lapse in federal funding. Content on this website will not be current or maintained until funding issues have been resolved. However, if there is information that affects security, life and property, this website will continue to update that information during a funding lapse." (Robert Moore, THE HENDERSONVILLE TIMES-NEWS, 1/20/18)

Women's March

Thousands of women gathered in cities across North Carolina to mark cities on the one-year anniversary of President Donald Trump's inauguration to build support for an agenda on issues like abortion, immigration and civil rights. The Charlotte Observer reports police said at least 5,000 people attended the march there. The marchers crowded into First Ward Park for two hours of speeches before walking through the streets waving banners and chanting phrases. Carolyn Logan of

the Black Women's Caucus of Charlotte-Mecklenburg called on women to support each other in the workplace and resist harassment of all kinds. Logan told marchers "

"Don't let this movement die." Mayor Vi Lyles, the first female African-American mayor in Charlotte history, also addressed the crowd. Marches were also held in Raleigh, Winston-Salem and Asheville.

Since the first Women's March last January, nearly 600 women have declared their intent to run for Congress or statewide offices, according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University. That's twice the number who'd announced by this time in recent elections. Emily's List, which helps elect Democratic women who support abortion rights, has heard from 26,000 women interested in running for office this year across the country. Two years ago the number was about 900. "We've never seen anything like this before in our history, this is truly a sea change," says spokeswoman Alexandra DeLuca. "It's going to be a historic year."

In North Carolina, several Democratic women have announced campaigns for the General Assembly, and party officials expect more by the time filing closes in February. Women now make up 43 of 170 lawmakers. According to the Center for American Women and Politics, at least 390 women already are running for Congress. Eighty percent are Democrats. "I don't accept the premise that there is a whole bunch more Democratic women than Republican women (running)," says Dallas Woodhouse, executive director of the N.C. GOP. "I guess it's good that Democrats woke up and decided women would be good candidates. We've known it for a long time."

This year, Charlotte's march was one of at least seven in North Carolina and one of scores across the country with the theme "Power to the Polls." National organizers held a rally in Las Vegas, where they'll launch a national voter registration drive. Last year's marches in Charlotte, Washington and around the country happened largely as a result of the 2016 presidential election. The movement continues to lean Democratic. "The Women's March, even if it said it wasn't a Trump march, was basically aimed at Donald Trump," says Susan Roberts, a Davidson College political scientist. Many of the women who marched a year ago have found their energy fueled by Trump's stormy first year as well as by the sexual harassment revelations that have rocked Hollywood, the media and politics. "The momentum has been sustained in large part because Donald Trump continues to say and do things that make the women ... just as angry and worried about the future," says Jennifer Lawless, director of American University's Women & Politics Institute. "Part of the reason the #metoo movement has taken off the way it has is because the infrastructure has been built by the Women's March."

Tami Fitzgerald, executive director of the conservative NC Values Coalition, said she regards the Women's March movement as primarily a pro-abortion rights effort that grew up in response to decades of grassroots work by anti-abortionists. The latter group, which held a march in Raleigh last weekend, just gets less media attention, Fitzgerald said. While she disagrees with the political positions of many of those inspired by the Women's March, Fitzgerald said, "We live in a country that allows discourse and encourages different points of view. "As a women and an attorney... it's encouraging to me to see women being treated with respect and to see their voices matter." (Jim Morrill and Martha Quillen, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER and THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1/19/18)

Resolution

The Onslow County Board of Education adopted a resolution Friday urging state legislation that would help Onslow County and other military-impacted communities in meeting a state mandate to reduce class size in grades K-3. The action followed a special meeting during which school board members and county commissioners had a chance to meet together with the county's legislative delegation to discuss the issue. The county's legislative delegation of state Sen. Harry Brown and Reps. George Cleveland, Phil Shepard and Bob Muller attended the special meeting that was held prior to the Board of Education workshop meeting.

Onslow County Schools Superintendent Rick Stout said the school district is seeing rapid growth, averaging more than 300 additional students each year. With the current K-3 class size requirements

to take full effect next school year, Stout said they face having to find the additional classroom space to meet the mandate on top of addressing the county's continued growth. The school district expects the need to hire at least 51 new elementary teachers to achieve the mandate and more classrooms means the need for more space. "Where we are at now space wise is we need 38 classrooms we don't have," Stout said.

As a school system in a military community, Stout said Onslow County is unique from many others in that they need the flexibility to address the fluctuating class sizes as military families transition in and out of the area. About 38 percent of its student population is military impacted. "We have a rollover from the beginning of the year to the end of the year of about 5,000 students so when we look at class size adjustments they are constant," Stout said.

Brown, R-Onslow, said he understands the unique challenges Onslow County faces but he also noted that the K-3 class size mandate is not new and since they started the process the General Assembly has put more than \$220 million to reducing class sizes in the K-3 grades. Yet, he said they continue to hear from teachers concerned about large classes and where the funding has gone. "I'm not blaming anyone," Brown said. "You can understand our side. I've got teachers complaining about the size of the classes they are teaching and we tried to address the issue."

Brown said a joint committee is working in Raleigh on the issue. "There is a joint committee trying to find a compromise and I think that is what will happen; I think they'll find some flexibility somewhere," he said. (Jannette Pippin, THE (Jacksonville, NC) DAILY NEWS, 1/19/18)

Conway Retirement

Elizabeth City State University Chancellor Thomas Conway's announcement last week that he plans to retire in May has come as a surprise to area elected officials. Rep. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, said Thursday he had not expected Conway -- who took over as chancellor at ECSU in Jan. 1, 2016 -- to retire this soon. "I caught me kind of off-guard," Steinburg said. "I wasn't expecting this."

But Steinburg said he understands that the chancellor feels the timing may be right for him to retire. Conway, who has worked for the University of North Carolina system for 45 years, said in an interview last week he believes the university is in a place of greater strength and resilience than when he arrived. Steinburg didn't disagree with that assessment. "I think he has done a good job," he said.

Elizabeth City Mayor Bettie Parker likewise said she was surprised to learn of Conway's retirement plans. "It was a shock to me," Parker said. "I am disheartened by it. I really hate to see him go because he was really working well with the community."

In announcing Conway's retirement to members of the UNC Board of Governors last week, UNC System President Margaret Spellings said she planned to appoint Karri Dixon, a UNC System vice president, to serve as interim chancellor upon Conway's retirement. Dixon has worked closely with Conway during his tenure at ECSU, Spellings said. (Reggie Ponder, THE (Elizabeth City) DAILY ADVANCE, 1/21/18)

Named

N.C. Commerce Secretary Anthony Copeland announced Friday that David Knight will join the Department of Commerce as the state's outdoor industry recruitment director. Knight will lead efforts to promote North Carolina's outdoor recreation economy and recruit new outdoor industry businesses to the state. "The outdoor recreation industry currently supports 260,000 jobs in North Carolina and is growing," Copeland said in a news release. "David will work with public and private-sector professionals and industry advocates to promote this growing industry and help recruit more outdoor recreation businesses to the state." Most recently, Knight established and ran his own policy consulting business based in Raleigh. Before that, he served as assistant secretary for natural resources at the N.C. Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, now known as the

Department of Environmental Quality. Knight supervised multiple divisions and offices at the agency including Parks and Recreation, Marine Fisheries, the North Carolina Zoo, N.C. Aquariums, and Forestry. Earlier in his career, Knight served as director of government relations for The North Carolina Nature Conservancy. Knight officially begins his duties on Monday, Jan. 22. (NEWS RELEASE, 1/19/18)

Elon Tuition

Elon University has set tuition for 2018--2019, increasing overall attendance costs by 3.05 percent -- a difference of \$1,407 from \$46,142 to \$47,549. Undergraduate tuition will be \$34,850, a more modest increase of 1.7 percent. Elon will use the additional money to increase the number of scholarships and financial aid packages available to students. It will be used also to hire additional Physical Plant employees, administrative assistants and three new health and wellness counselors. "Our goal is to carefully steward resources and ensure that new investments are targeted to support Elon's student-centered programs," President Leo Lambert said Thursday in a news release. The 3.05 percent rise in attendance costs will be the second-smallest percentage increase in more than 25 years, Lambert added. Increased tuition revenues will help support operational expenses associated with buildings scheduled to open in the fall. (Bryan Anderson, THE BURLINGTON TIMES-NEWS, 1/20/18)

REAL ID

Fort Bragg has put its plans to begin enforcing stricter ID requirements at the post's gates on hold. Officials said plans to enforce the long-delayed REAL ID Act have been delayed indefinitely. Previously, Fort Bragg officials said the nation's largest military installation would begin enforcing REAL ID on Monday. Last month, they cautioned that visitors to Fort Bragg without a REAL ID Act-compliant license would need a second form of ID to obtain a pass to come onto post. But on Friday, officials said visitors will be able to continue to use previously approved forms of identification to access post. "As soon as we receive additional guidance, we will make sure to let the community know," a spokeswoman said.

The REAL ID Act will eventually affect how members of the public obtain access to military installations and other federal facilities, such as federal courthouses. The law creating REAL ID was born out of recommendations from the 9/11 Commission report in 2004. That report noted that preventing terrorists from obtaining state-issued identification documents was critical to national security. The REAL ID Act serves as a mandate on federal agencies, and participation by states is voluntary, although federal agencies are prohibited from accepting identification from noncompliant states for many official purposes.

Enforcement of the law has been repeatedly delayed in recent years to give states more time to comply with the law. Eventually, a new REAL ID-compliant license or other acceptable forms of identification will also be required for domestic air travel. The Department of Homeland Security said REAL ID will be enforced for such travel starting Oct. 1, 2020. Fort Bragg began enforcing parts of the REAL ID Act last year when it stopped accepting driver's licenses from states that were not compliant with the law. (Drew Brooks, THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER, 1/19/18)

False Alarm

Emergency sirens from Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant in Apex were heard early Friday afternoon, prompting officials to assure those in the area that there was no emergency. The sirens were accidentally activated at 12:58 p.m., according to a tweet by the state Department of Public Safety. At 1:42 p.m., Wake County released a statement, saying "there is NO emergency at the Harris Nuclear Plant. Individuals near Apex are not in danger and do not need to take action."

Cary spokeswoman Susan Moran said, "Our 911 center talked to the Shearon Harris Plant, and they said there was a false alarm that went off in Apex." The Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant is operated by Duke Energy. It is southwest of Apex, on the shores of Shearon Harris Reservoir and south of Jordan Lake. Brandon Thomas, a spokesman for the power company, said this afternoon

that several sirens in Apex and Cary misfired and that the utility is in the process of checking the sirens. There are 83 sirens within a 10-mile radius of the plant. Thomas said he wasn't sure whether any sirens were still blaring. The alarms at the Wake County nuclear power plant sounded nearly a week after a worker at the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency accidentally prompted a text message alert that went out to residents and vacationers on the island falsely warning of an incoming missile. The incident prompted many questions about why it took state officials 38 minutes to correct the message. Similar questions about timing are being posed on social media platforms from residents in the path of Shearon Harris emergency exit routes. (Henry Gargan and Anne Blythe, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 1/19/18)

Duke Commencement

Apple CEO and Duke University business school graduate Tim Cook is the choice to deliver the school's commencement address this spring. Duke president Vincent E. Price announced the news on Saturday. The commencement is scheduled for May 13. A news release from the school said Cook earned his MBA in 1988 from Duke, where he was a Fuqua Scholar, an honor given only to students who graduate in the top 10 percent of their class. He received a bachelor of science degree in industrial engineering from Auburn University in 1982. Cook has been a member of the Duke Board of Trustees since 2015 and is a member of the facilities and environment committee. (THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1/20/18)

House Calendar

Monday, Jan. 22

House Convenes at 12:00 p.m.

- No Bills Scheduled.

Senate Calendar

Monday, Jan. 22

Senate Convenes at 12:00 p.m.

- No Bills Scheduled.

Legislative Studies and Meetings

Items in **RED** are new listings.

LB: Legislative Building

LOB: Legislative Office Building.

More Information: <http://ncleg.net/LegislativeCalendar/>

Monday, Jan. 22

- 1 p.m. | The Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee, 544 LOB.
- 1 p.m. | The Joint Select Committee on Judicial Reform and Redistricting (2017), 643 LOB.

Wednesday, Jan. 24

- 10 a.m. | Child Fatality Task Force Meeting, 1027/1128 LB.

Thursday, Jan. 25

- 9 a.m. | Joint Legislative Emergency Management Oversight Committee, 544 LOB.
- 10 a.m. | Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety, JPS Subcommittee on ABC Permitting & Enforcement, 1124/1224 LB.
- 1 p.m. | The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety, 643 LOB.

Tuesday, Jan. 30

- 10:30 a.m. | The Social Services Regional Supervision and Collaboration Working Group (2017), UNC School of Government / Rooms 2401 & 2403.

Wednesday, Jan. 31

- 10 a.m. | The Joint Legislative Task Force on Education Finance Reform (2017), 544 LOB.

Tuesday, Feb. 6

- 9 a.m. | The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on General Government, 544 LOB.
- 10 a.m. | Child Fatality Task Force Meeting, 1027/1128 LB.
- 11 a.m. | The Permanency Innovation Initiative Oversight Committee, 421 LOB.
- 1 p.m. | The Joint Legislative Commission on Energy Policy, 544 LOB.

Thursday, Feb. 8

- 9 a.m. | The Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee, 643 LOB.

Monday, Feb. 12

- 9 a.m. | Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, Subcommittee on Aging, 423 LOB.

Tuesday, Feb. 13

- 10 a.m. | Child Fatality Task Force Meeting - Unintentional Death Prevention Committee, 1027/1128 LB.

Wednesday, March 7

- 10 a.m. | Child Fatality Task Force Full Meeting, 1027/1128 LB

N.C. Government Meetings and Hearings

Items in **RED** are new listings.

Monday, Jan. 22

- 6 p.m. | Members of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council hold public hearing on proposed changes for Atlantic cobia via webinar. Visit: <http://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/public-hearings-scoping-meetings/>. Contact: Kim Iverson, 843-571-4366, kim.iverson@safmc.net.

Tuesday, Jan. 23

- 8:30 a.m. | The Fund Development and Communications Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, 919-821-9573.
- 10 a.m. | The Board of Directors Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, 919-821-9573.
- 6 p.m. | The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries hold public hearing on a proposed shellfish lease in Dare County, N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, 1021 Driftwood Dr., Manteo.
- 7 p.m. | The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, John A. Holmes High School Auditorium, 600 Woodard St., Edenton.

Wednesday, Jan. 24

- 6 p.m. | The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries hold public hearing on a proposed shellfish lease in Onslow County, Onslow County Government Center, 234 Northwest Corridor Blvd., Jacksonville.
- 7 p.m. | The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, Craven Community College, 800 College Court, New Bern.

Thursday, Jan. 25

- 9 a.m. | The Strategic Planning Committee of the North Carolina State Ports Authority Board of Directors meets, Board Room of the North Carolina Maritime Building located at 2202 Burnett Boulevard Wilmington. The Board of Directors meeting will follow the Strategic Planning Committee meeting.
- 7 p.m. | The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, Nash Community College, 522 N Old Carriage Road, Rocky Mount.

Wednesday, Jan. 31

- 6 p.m. | The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries' Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Advisory Committee meets, N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Washington regional office, 943 Washington Square Mall, Washington.

Wednesday, Feb. 14

- 6 p.m. | The N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission accepting public comment on proposed changes to commercial fishing license, Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Blvd., Wrightsville Beach.

Wednesday, Feb. 28

- 6 p.m. | The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries holds public hearing on proposed shellfish leases in Pender County, Surf City Visitor's Center, 102 North Shore Dr., Surf City.

UNC Board of Governors

Board Room of the UNC Center for School Leadership Development
 140 Friday Center Drive, Chapel Hill (**remote meeting locations in RED**)
 More Information: <https://www.northcarolina.edu/bog/schedule.php>

Friday, Jan. 26

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, March 23

- TBA | UNC Wilmington, Wilmington.

Friday, May 25

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

N.C. Utilities Commission Hearing Schedule

Dobbs Building
430 North Salisbury Street
Raleigh, North Carolina
More Information: <http://www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us/activities/activit.htm>

Monday, Jan. 22

- Staff Conference

Monday, Jan. 29

- Staff Conference

Monday, Feb. 5

- Staff Conference

N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality

The N.C. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources has a new name - the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality. More Information: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/home>

Tuesday, Jan. 23

- 6 p.m. | The Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Advisory Committee meets, N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Washington regional office, 943 Washington Square Mall, Washington.

Thursday, Feb. 8

- 6 p.m. | Rescheduled public hearing on proposed shellfish leases in New Hanover County, N.C. Department of Environmental Quality Regional Office, 127 Cardinal Drive Extension, Wilmington. Contact: Michael Graven, 252-808-8061, Michael.Graven@ncdenr.gov.

Other Meetings and Events of Interest

Items in **RED** are new listings.

Monday, Jan. 22

- 10 a.m. | N.C. Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall speaks at the Burke County Register of Deeds kick-off for the e-recording of property plats, Burke County Register of Deeds Office, 201 South Green St., Morganton.

- **11:30 a.m. | Governor Cooper to hold a press conference on North Carolina's opposition to offshore drilling and seismic testing, Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Blvd, Wrightsville Beach.**

Monday, Feb. 12

- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for U.S. House of Representatives begins, N.C. State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement, 430 N Salisbury St, Raleigh.
- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for District Attorney begins, N.C. State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement, 430 N Salisbury St, Raleigh.
- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for N.C. Senate begins, local county Board of Elections.
- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for N.C. House of Representatives begins, local county Board of Elections.
- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for most County Offices (Check with your local county BOE offices) begins, local county Board of Elections.

Wednesday, Feb. 28

- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for U.S. House of Representatives ends, N.C. State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement, 430 N Salisbury St, Raleigh.
- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for District Attorney ends, N.C. State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement, 430 N Salisbury St, Raleigh.
- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for N.C. Senate ends, local county Board of Elections.
- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for N.C. House of Representatives ends, local county Board of Elections.
- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for most County Offices (Check with your local county BOE offices) ends, local county Board of Elections.

Monday, March 19

- TBD | The N.C. Chamber hold annual meeting, Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley, 4500 Marriott Dr, Raleigh.

Monday, June 11

- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor begins, local county Board of Elections.

Monday, June 18

- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for all Judicial Offices begins, N.C. State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement, 430 N Salisbury St, Raleigh.

Friday, June 29

- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for all Judicial Offices ends, N.C. State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement, 430 N Salisbury St, Raleigh.

Friday, July 6

- 12 p.m. | Candidate filing for Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor ends, local county Board of Elections.

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